

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4874

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 1836

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PFOR MILI PINR CB

SUBJECT: MANSFIELD SUPPORT OF SIHANOUK POSITION

REF: STATE 019007 (EA PRESS SUMMARY JANUARY 29)

1. WE NOTE IN REFTEL THAT SENATOR MANSFIELD IN MAKING PUBLIC ANOTHER CABLE FROM SIHANOUK ENDORSED SIHANOUK'S APPEAL TO "LET CAMBODIANS MANAGE OWN AFFAIRS" AND TOLD SENATE THAT THE CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA IS A CIVIL WAR IN WHICH "ALL OUT-SIDE ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE REFUSED".

2. WE BELIEVE THIS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE OCCASION FOR AMBASSADOR UM SIM TO GIVE SENATOR MANSFIELD A MORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION HERE. IF YOU AGREE, YOU MIGHT WISH TO SUGGEST TO UM SIM THAT HE SEEK ANOTHER CHAT WITH MANSFIELD. ALTHOUGH UM SIM WILL PROBABLY NEED LITTLE PROMPTING, FOLLOWING POINTS SEEM TO US TO BE WORTH MAKING:

(A) SIHANOUK'S LOOSE AND ERRONEOUS TALK ABOUT GKR DEPENDENCE ON THE U.S. RINGS EXCEEDINGLY HOLLOW WHEN ONE EXAMINES THE STATUS OF THE PRINCE AND HIS ENTOURAGE.

ALTHOUGH GRUNK HAS BELATEDLY MOVED TO ESTABLISH ITS "IN-COUNTRY" CREDENTIALS, NONETHELESS, ITS NOMINAL HEAD, SIHANOUK, FOREIGN MINISTER AND OTHER OFFICIALS, ARE TOTALLY FINANCED AND SUPPORTED IN PEKING BY THE PRC.

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GRUNK/FUNK'S PRINCIPAL PROPAGANDA ORGAN, ITS CLANDESTINE

RADIO, IS LOCATED IN HANOI AND FINANCED BY THE DRV. MORE BASICALLY, KC TROOPS ARE ALMOST TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE THEY RECEIVE FROM THE DRV. MILITARY MATERIAL CAPTURED IN THE FIGHTING AROUND PHNOM PENH DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS PROVIDE CLEAR PROOF THAT THIS ASSISTANCE IS CONTINUING AT A HIGH LEVEL. THESE WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION, WHICH ARE OF SOVIET AND PRC MAKES AND IN MANY CASES COMPLETELY NEW, INCLUDING B-40 AND B-41 ROCKETS, 75MM RECOILLESS RIFLES AND CHINESE 7MM ROUNDS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE 122MM ROCKETS WHICH HAVE RECENTLY CAUSED SO MANY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES ALSO COME FROM NVN. DRV ADVISORS STILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE WITH KC, AND WE HAVE RELIABLE RECENT INTELLIGENCE THAT A NORTH VIETNAMESE SAPPR UNIT IS RETURNING TO CAMBODIA AT THE KC'S REQUEST. ALL THIS LEAVES NO DOUBT ABOUT GRUNK/FUNK DEPENDENCE ON "OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE".

(B) SINCE SENATOR MANSFIELD'S SUPPORT FOR SIHANOUK SEEMS TO BE BASED PRINCIPALLY ON PAST PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP, IT MIGHT TO HELPFUL FOR UM SIM TO POINT OUT ONCE AGAIN SIHANOUK'S DIM FUTURE WITH THE KC. THE NEWLY APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE IN-COUNTRY KC CABINET ARE KNOWN AS ANTI-SIHANOUKISTS, RECENT RALLIERS AND PRISONERS HAVE NOTED THAT THE KC NO LONGER MAINTAIN THE PRETENSE OF RETURNING SIHANOUK TO POWER, AND THE PRINCE HIMSELF HAS BEEN QUITE EXPLICIT AS TO HIS DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE.
ENDERS

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